WORKING TOWARDS EQUAL ACCESS TO SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS AMONG THE YOUTH IN MALAWI

Community Voices and Success Stories from Dedza District, Malawi
ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus
CDSS: Community Day Secondary School
GVH: Group Village Headman/woman
SRHR: Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights
T/A: Traditional Authority
CYECE: Centre for Youth Empowerment and Civic Education
YFHS: Youth Friendly Health Services
STI: Sexually Transmitted Infection

Contributors:
Tisungane Nanthoka
Prisca Chakholoma
Taleka Nyenzei Makunje

Editor:
Edward C. Banda
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1.0 BACKGROUND

Centre for Youth Empowerment and Civic Education (CYECE) with support from Choice for Youth and Sexuality is implementing a project “Toward quality Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and zero child marriages” which aims at reducing early and forced marriages and advocating for the availability and accessibility of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) among young people in rural areas.

The project is being implemented in Dedza as a result of increased incidences of child marriages in Malawi with one out of two girls in the country being married by her eighteenth birthday, according to the United Nations. The project seeks to perpetuate child marriages at national level and dealing with harmful cultural practices at local level through community mobilization, advocacy, awareness and capacity building for positive behavioral change. The advocacy interventions resulted in the passing of the minimum age of marriage bill in 2015 by Malawi Parliament where minimum age was shifted from 15 to 18 years and formulation of community by-laws by chiefs and other local leaders.

The project being implemented is supported by Dutch ministry of foreign affairs through Choice for Youth and Sexuality and is complementing other interventions by CYECE in Dedza district where it is contributing to strengthening the position of girls and young people through imparting knowledge and skills on SRHR to help them make safe and informed decisions, mobilization of local communities to change harmful social, traditional and religious norms, and advocacy policy and legislation to create an enabling environment for young people’s SRHR.

The project implementation began in January 2011 and ending in December 2015. The interventions during the period have registered some enormous success stories and this booklet is a collection of just a few of the success stories and community voices regarding the issue of child marriages and girls access to SRH services. The booklet gives an insight into how the project has changed the lives of staff members, youth advocates, community and religious leaders, young people and other beneficiaries of the program in Dedza district.
2.0 STORIES AND VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

2.1 Challenging community harmful cultural practices that fuel child marriages

2.1.1 "Child Marriage is Not a Fate I want to Subject My Children to": A Parent Tells Their Story

Being a single mother of 6, who herself was married off at such a tender age left Anaphiri with no choice but to marry off her eldest daughter when she turned 15, hoping that she will rescue the family from the claws of poverty. When her husband divorced her and left her with the sore responsibility of raising 6 children alone, Anaphiri was left helpless and calculated that her only option is to marry off her eldest daughter, Chikondi, to a rich man.

However Chikondi was saved from the fate of an early and forced marriage when she was introduced to a youth club being managed by CYECE where youths are empowered with knowledge to support their SRH rights. When Chikondi shared her story with the group, the matron took an initiative to civic educate Chikondi’s mother on the dangers of early marriages and encourage her to send Chikondi back to school promising to provide her with scholastic materials.

Anaphiri tells her story, “When Chikondi dropped out of school I did not have a problem with it because we were struggling and I needed the extra help, I also knew that soon enough I would marry her off to a rich husband who would also support us. I even had similar plans for her younger sisters to follow after her. However after Chikondi joined the youth club and was identified as one of the beneficiaries for scholastic support, there has been a huge and positive change in her attitude and how well she is doing in school has been so inspiring and motivating to her siblings. Through the counseling I have received I now know the importance of education for my children. I have learnt of the negative impacts of early and forced marriages and that is not a fate I want to subject my children to.”

Currently, Anaphiri is working hard so that she is able to provide for her children and is grateful to the program for supporting Chikondi with school fees as she may otherwise not have been able to afford it.
2.1.2 Insights from Group Village Headwoman Kapenuka

CYECE has been working in Kapenuka Village, in Dedza for 5 years now in a bid to help eliminate early and forced marriages among the girls. Kapenuka village is one of the villages that had registered high rates of early marriages and teenage pregnancies among the youth of the age range of 13-18.

One of the interventions that were employed by CYECE was to conduct community awareness meetings with community leaders and parents where they were civic educated on the dangers of early marriages and teenage pregnancies. Such meetings would encompass activities such as; community dialogue sessions where people would discuss harmful cultural practices and religious norms and they would come up with suggestions on how to modify them to create a friendly environment for the girl child; training community leaders on issues of girls SRHR by popularizing girl friendly policies. Through these activities, the situation in T/A Kapenuka has changed for the better. Group Village Headwoman Kapenuka can testify of this change.

“At first it was acceptable for young girls to get married at such tender ages. In fact it was an admirable thing when a family marries off their young daughter because that would mean their financial status has improved from the dowry they would get for her. So many families would force their daughters into marriages especially to rich older men. But with this project from CYECE, we have learnt that doing such is an infringement of the rights of the girls therefore we have set by-laws to ensure that girls are not forced into marriages. Our minds have been opened to see that girls too have the potential to have a bright future, they are not only meant to be wives and mothers. Now we encourage our girls to continue with school.”

As much as the attitudes of the community has changed, there is still a lot of work to be done as some parents still encourage their daughters to get into marriages as a way of escaping their poverty. GVH Kapenuka is now a happy woman as she can see that her village has generally embraced the idea of sending girls to school and can foresee the development of her village.
2.1.3 By-Laws Promoting The Protection Of Girls

Malawian culture stigmatizes teenage pregnancies as such, marriage is regarded as a way of protecting the pregnant girl child from undermining family integrity, and this is done disregarding the child’s physical and psychosocial well-being. This common norm has led a majority of young girls into forced marriages for reasons of being pregnant, a belief known as "kulondetsa" in Dedza. Young girls are often married off in order to ensure that the father of the baby supports the girl and the child but it is not often fulfilled. It is because of these reasons that Dedza had increased cases of early marriages.

That however is water under the bridge in Kamenyagwaza, for CYECE through the child marriage project it is implementing in Dedza facilitated the formulation of by-laws against child marriages. These by-laws punish and fine anyone who forces anyone to marry below the age of 18. Every group village head in TA Kamenyagwaza adhered to these by-laws and the community leaders are held accountable if they break the laws.

Some of the by-laws that were established include; any girl below 18 years of age must not enter into marriage but go to school, parents should not force or accept under 18 years girls into marriage, if a girl under 18 years is found pregnant she should not be forced into marriage.

It is through these bye laws that GVH Kamenyagwaza is championing the withdrawal of children from child marriages;

“Everyone deserves a shot at a bright future, it is not fair to force anyone to get married for these young people are the leaders of tomorrow. I respect their rights and pity the parents who force the children to get married at a tender age, their selfish desires for support are putting the young girls at risk of physical complications during child birth. I use these by-laws as a basis for punishing the people who are breaking these laws. Let us uplift the young people so that they can take care of us in future.”

The traditional leaders work hand in hand with the young people and parents in identifying the cases of child marriages and withdrawing them to further their education. The girls who are also at risk of being married are counselled to protect them from such.
2.2 Strengthening the position of girls and imparting important knowledge for use in their daily lives

2.2.1 Leading By Example: The Story Of Trascar Madeya

Trascar Madeya is a 17 year old girl from Simuka village in Kamenyagwaza. From just looking at her one would think she is a normal teenager, who goes to school and leads a happy life. However it is only upon deeper interaction with her where one can really get a glimpse of her past.

Trascar’s story may sound typical of most rural girls’; poor family, absent father, lack of school fees and no prospects in life except marriage. At least that was her story as she tells it herself, “I grew up in a poor family and had many younger siblings all looking up to my mum and I to eat and live. Going to school was honestly a waste of time I could have been using to make an income. It’s not like I didn’t like school but most of the people in my community who have completed secondary school hardly ever make it to college or get a job so it is impossible to be motivated when you can just drop out and help bring income to the family. The only other alternative would have been to get married and have a husband who would provide the income.”

That was Trascar’s way of thinking before she started attending Girls Discussion Forums, Girls Conferences and Youth Club Meetings. However the story has now changed for her as she has been empowered with knowledge and skills to make better choices where her body and education are concerned. Trascar is now committed to completing her education and realizes that marriage is not the answer to her family’s financial problems. Trascar is committed to speaking out against child marriages and advocating for girls SRHR that she is now the Chairperson of her community’s youth club.
2.2.2 Girl Empowerment

Mariah is a 22 year old vibrant young lady, just by one look at her, one would not know about the pain that she has been through.

“I live with my mother, my father passed away when I was very young and I do not remember very much about him. We have lived in abject poverty most of my life. I was helping my mother in business and alternating with school and it did not go well for me” narrates Mariah.

Mariah dropped out of school because of the challenges her and her family were facing and she started selling local beer. Dedza, where she is from, is well known for its beer drinking habits. She had a regular customer that would every now and then provide her with some money, he wanted to start a relationship with her but she was hesitant

“He was coming every day and was giving me money and buying me groceries from time to time, and I eventually gave in to his relationship as my mother was also encouraging me to go for him because he seemed caring, we started a relationship and I fell pregnant, we agreed to get married and everything was in process”, she added

However she was approached by a team of young people who were trained through a CYECE project being implemented in partnership with CHOICE for youth and sexuality. They warned her about the dangers of early and forced marriages and encouraged her to return to school. She talked to the man so that they can wait until she finished her secondary school education but he declined and insulted her.

“He called me all sorts of names and concluded that I had found someone else, he started doubting if the baby was even his and he eventually left me and I have never heard from him ever since. My mother was devastated as she could not provide for me and my soon to be born child and she pressured me to find another man who can take care of me, she got to the point of wanting me to be the second wife of another man who was interested in me, I declined and approached the youth club members. It was at this point that I decided to join the youth club and benefit from the advice I could get there, I managed to talk to my mother and encourage her that we can make it.”

Fast forward, Mariah has become very influential in her area, she has been working hand in hand with CYECE and has represented her youth club at a national youth SRHR convention. She has recently finished secondary school and is awaiting results of the examinations.
2.2.3 Courage in the face of Adversity – the story of Alinafe

“I could not manage on my own; I just had to do it. I lost all hope for ever going back to school, I had settled and I thought that was life”

Like many young girls her age, Alinafe found herself rushing into marriage at such a tender age because of her family’s inability to provide for her.
16 year old Alinafe from Kamtande village lost her mother at age 15 and her father remarried another lady and forsook his responsibilities towards her and her siblings. This left Alinafe the duty of taking care of her younger siblings. She could not provide for them and her friends encouraged her to find a man who can be able to provide for her needs.

When Alinafe met a man that offered to provide for her and her siblings, she decided to drop out of school and get married to him in order to secure her future. Tingatethe youth club members heard about the situation and intervened. These youth club members were trained by CYECE as youth advocates through a project that was funded by CHOICE for youth and sexuality. They started to visit her and counsel her on the dangers of early marriages and the importance of education. She eventually gave in and returned to school.

“He started to threaten to deal with me if I didn’t go back to the marriage, I eventually gave in and went back to him because I was scared of what might happen to me in the long run and I felt so powerless” Alinafe narrated.

The youth club members decided to intervene again and approached the chief to handle the case, he then summoned the husband who then paid a fine and was advised to stay away from Alinafe. The chief also talked to Alinafe’s father who resumed support to his children.

Alinafe was mainstreamed back to school and she is currently in standard 7 at Kantchito primary school, she is also taking part in encouraging others to return to school.
2.3.4 “Education is The Only Way out of Poverty”; The Story of Regina Mangani

Regina Mangani (17) of Kamgulitse village, T/A Kamenyagwaza in Dedza is a mother of a two year old daughter who has just returned to back to school. Her story is not that different from the stories of many girls in her village who have had to drop out of school because their parents could not afford to support them with scholastic materials.

Born in a family of 8 children, her parents struggled to help support all of them with basic necessities which forced Regina to drop out of school because she lacked school materials.

“I dropped out of school because I thought I would lessen the burden on my parents. Although my parents were against it, I still dropped out and got romantically involved with an older man who promised to marry me and provide for me.”

When Regina got pregnant, she left her home and went to live with the man against her parents’ advice. Little did she know that the man would become abusive both physically and emotionally! At only age 15, Regina’s life changed drastically; being a teenage mother in an abusive marriage, she had lost all hope for the future and believed that she would never find happiness.

When one of her friends invited her to one of CYECE’s youth club meetings, she went just to escape the torment at her home. When she heard the members encouraging each other to stay in school, and heard testimonies from other girls who had returned back to school, she saw a ray hope for her future.

She made up her mind to leave the abusive marriage and return to her parent’s home where she can go back to school. She asked some of the youth club members and the matron to help her apologize to her parents and ask them to take her back. Her parents did not hesitate but call her back and promised to support her with scholastic materials.

Now she is a devoted member of Tiyamike Youth Club and encourages other girls to go back to school. Her ambition is to become a nurse.
2.3.5 Boys are also Perpetrators of Child Marriages

When we talk about early and forced marriages we usually talk of parents/guardians forcing children into marriages. It is very rare when it turns out to be a boyfriend forcing a young girl to marry him. That is the case of Fostina, a 16 year old from Nadzik Hale village who told her story during a girl’s discussion forum.

“I had been with my boyfriend since I was 14 years old. He was older than me and would always try to entice me into having sex with him but I would always refuse saying I was too young and wanted to wait for marriage. After a year of this he started forcing me to marry him and even though he said it was because he loved me I suspected it was because he wanted to have sex with me. I was adamant in my decision not to marry because I wanted to focus on my education. He went as far as approaching my parents behind my back to ask for my hand in marriage but luckily they turned him away. After attending a life skills education session in my youth club, I learnt about confidence, decision—making and self-esteem, I finally got the courage to end the relationship and I am happy to say I am now concentrating on completing my education without any distractions.”

Such Youth clubs being managed by CYECE have been a platform for confidence building for the girls in Dedza. It is a place where they motivate each other through experience sharing to be focused on education and not marriages.
2.3 Improving Access To Formal Education For Girls

2.3.1 Teacher from Bembeke sees Change

Jane Jana is a teacher at Bembeke CDSS who served as a mentor at the ‘Girls SRHR and Education Conference’ that was recently conducted by CYECE and hosted about 150 people. During the conference she spoke extensively about the changes that have taken place since the inception of the project. She explained that before the implementation of the program, girls would drop out of school due to lack of fees, uniform or scholastic materials. Even with the existence of the ‘Social Welfare’ bursary, such girls would fail to access school fees because of the long process involved as well as the long waiting list. Therefore the only solution for such girls would be marriage, in most cases forced.

She stated that due to the provision of school fees for girls withdrawn from or vulnerable to child marriages by the UACM project there has been a tremendous change, such that enrollment has increased and drop-out rates alternatively have decreased.

“Several girls who had dropped out because their parents couldn’t afford to pay school fees for them have enrolled back to school and not only does this mean they will acquire an education; it also means they will be prevented from potentially being forced into early marriages” she said.

Aside from the girls benefitting from the school fees Mrs. Jana also stated that enrollment in general among girls has increased due to raised awareness of the importance of education that they have gained from attending Girls Discussion Forums, Life Skills Education Sessions as well as Youth Club meetings.

The girls that are benefitting from the school fees, according to her, are doing well in school as they are motivated by the fact that they have school fees, uniforms and other scholastic materials necessary for excelling.
2.3.2 Youths United to Bring Hope to the Hopeless

Looking at her face, you would assume that she is just a normal teenager, facing the ‘adolescent’ challenges everyone expects her to, little do you know that she has gone through situations even greater than her age. At the tender age of 14, she has had to shoulder the maternal responsibility of taking care of her siblings. This is the story of Tereza Banda from Mkungumbe village, T/A Kamenyagwaza, Dedza, Malawi.

Tereza is the fourth born in a family of eight children all dependent on a single mother. Due to difficult situations, her mother was forced to send her two older brothers to town to look for piece jobs whilst her older sister was given off into marriage at a tender age. This left Tereza as the oldest among the children that were left at home and automatically put her in a position of responsibility over her siblings. When her mother was struggling to provide for the family, she forced Tereza to drop out of school so that she could help her managing the household; babysitting her siblings and helping her work in the field to earn money to provide for the family.

When the members of Chiyambi Youth Club, (one the clubs established by CYECE which champion girls education and ensures that girls are withdrawn from child marriages and sent back to school) heard of her fate, they approached her mother and encouraged her to send Tereza back to school and to support her with her class work. When her mother indicated that she could not afford to support her with scholastic materials, the youth club members volunteered to provide her with such materials. The youth club members engage in after-school and weekend piece jobs to earn money to help sending girls back to school. Tereza is one of the girls that has benefited from such youth clubs.

Currently, Tereza has been enrolled back into school and is being supported by the youth club which engages in after school piece jobs to earn money to support girls in the communities.

“I am very happy that I am back in school now. I work hard in class so that I can become a teacher and help other girls to attain an education”.

Tereza Banda, 14
2.3.3 Jackeline Posiyana: Forging on Against All Odd

The story of Jackeline Posiyana, 15, from Mkungumbe village, TA Kamenyagwaza depicts brevity and courage in such tough situations.

Only at the age of 12 her mother abandoned her to be married off to another man in another district. She had no other option but to stay with her ailing grandmother who was struggling even to fend for herself. Two years later when her health had further deteriorated, her grandmother informed her that she had to shoulder the responsibility of taking care of the two of them. This news was shocking to her but she knew that was their only option. When a few days later her grandmother introduced her to a man whom she said she has chosen for her to get married to, she knew things had turned worse. She did not want to get married because that would mean dropping out of school.

“My grandmother told me that I had to get married to the man so that he can be supporting us. I refused, but she told me that it is either I get married or leave her house. I tried to convince her to let me finish school, but she was adamant. So I left her house.”

Jackeline went back to the house that used to belong to her late father which was still vacant since her mother left. She started living there alone, doing after-school piece works to earn money to buy basic necessities. When she wrote Primary School leaving certificate examinations, she was selected to Bembeke Secondary School, one of the prominent schools in her community. Her joy was soon replaced with sadness as she knew that she could not afford to pay for the school fees.

One of the matrons for CYECE youth club at Bembeke heard her story and invited her to the youth club meeting. The matron listed her on the list of girls needing scholarships which was sent to CYECE. Fortunately, she got the scholarship and is now being fully supported by CYECE. The matron also liaised with relatives from her mother’s side who have now taken the responsibility of providing her with household necessities. Jackeline is an active member of the
youth club and shares her story with other girls to encourage them to stay in school regardless of the challenges that they meet.

2.4 Policies And Legislation Countering Child Marriages

2.5 Improving Access To SRH Services For Married And Unmarried Girls

2.5.1 Increasing the Uptake of SRH services

Access and availability of SRHR services has always been a challenge to the residents of Kamenyagwaza in Dedza, Malawi despite the area having two hospitals; a mission hospital and a government hospital. The mission hospital is quite closer to the community but refuses to provide SRHR services like contraceptives. Whilst the government hospital, though a long distance from the community, provides the services but does not have the resources most of the times. Such is the plight of youths from this area as they have to travel, often on foot, several kilometers away just to access these services.

Florence, a girl from Kamenyagwaza narrates the problem- “Most of us go to school, after school we have to walk back long distances to our homes then help with household chores and after that the day is over. When we want to access services such as condoms or contraceptives we have to wait for the weekend and after walking such a long distance we are sent back by health service providers because resources are not available or at times because we are youths they don’t take us seriously enough and prefer to reserve the available limited resources for adults”

When CYECE learnt of the situation, it organized Interface meetings between youths and service providers where both sides were given a platform to voice out their concerns and defend themselves if necessary. This was also followed by Community Scorecard meetings where the communities had to rate the service providers and give them pointers on how they can improve their service delivery. These
interventions have led to an increase in uptake of SRH services.

However, the community was still facing the problem of lack of resources and long distance to the hospital. This was combated by the introduction of mobile health service providers who provide SRHR services right in their homes and work in collaboration with FPAM which provides them with the resources. Now, the youths are able to go to hospitals with confidence and request for SRH services as they have now been equipped with knowledge of their rights.

2.5.2 St Anne’s hospital

St Anne’s hospital situated at Bembeke is the only hospital in close vicinity to the people of TA Kamenyagwaza and it is run by the Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAM). However, CHAM hospital does not provide any family planning services due to the principles of the church, this being the case, young people in Kamenyagwaza were not able to access any form of contraceptive despite the need. This also contributed to increased incidences of young girls falling pregnant and being forced into marriages. This also increased the chances of young people getting sexually transmitted infection in the area.

Through a project being implemented by CYECE in Kamenyagwaza funded by CHOICE for youth and sexuality, the story is different now. YECE identified some government service providers in the community and brought them on board in championing SRHR for young people. These service providers interface with young people to identify ways in which there can be improvements in service delivery and the young people access the services from these providers in their communities.

“it is important to give these young people information and services as it their right, our doors are always open to whoever wants family planning services and where we cannot provide the services, we always provide some referrals. We do not discriminate for it is our responsibility to serve everyone despite their age or gender. If youth clubs want information on certain services, they can always invite us to come over and we can make a presentation if need be.” Mr Kupempha, one of the health surveillance assistants had this to say.

Through these interface meetings, young people have been encouraged to get the services from these service providers and this has strengthened the relationship amongst the
service providers and the young people and in the long run has prevented many teenage pregnancies.

“I am confident enough to approach the health surveillance assistants as they receive us in a friendly manner and that is encouraging. Whenever our youth clubs hold meetings with the community, we sometimes invite them to offer services to the community or within the youth club itself, for this we are thankful” Stella Kainja of Tithetse youth club.

2.5.3 Improving SRH Services Through Interface Meetings

“Most male health workers have a negative attitude especially towards girls. In some cases they say that if we are “nice” to them they will give us good services”. That is a direct quote from one of the girls who participated in a ‘Community Scorecard Meeting’. Her story is not new and resonated with several other girls who complained of ill treatment from service providers.

Following the scorecard meeting, the program engaged health workers for an Interface meeting between them and the girls. This forum proved to be successful because the girls were given a platform to voice out their concerns regarding access to and availability of SRHR services and information. The forum also allowed health service providers to give the girls feedback on the concerns they raised.

Following the meeting one of the health service providers stated that “This was an eye-opener. We were not aware of how long some of these girls have to travel to access services or how poorly they are treated by some service providers. We will take into account the issues they raised and all the recommendations made will definitely be acted upon”.

2.5.3 Girls back to school

Life in T/A Kamenyagwaza, Dedza, has been simple and laid out for every girl in the community. Growing up in a community where girls are not really encouraged to attend school but are rather reminded of their bodies being the greatest asset they have to help them escape the poverty in their families made education of no value to most girls.

When CYECE introduced a project in the area which aimed at eliminating child marriages and
teenage pregnancies, it was faced with a lot of opposition from the parents, community leaders as well as the girls themselves. This promised of a tough road ahead.

With the help on a few community volunteers, CYECE has managed to conduct awareness meetings in the communities on the dangers on early marriages and teen pregnancies. Three years down the line, we can boldly proclaim that there is victory.

One of the major changes being the change in attitudes of the community leaders and parents from that of viewing girls as their way out of poverty by subjecting them to early marriages to that of encouraging girls to stay in school in order to improve their livelihood.

Within the years that CYECE has worked in Kamenyagwaza, it has managed to withdraw about 42 girls from child marriages and has mainstreamed them back to school. The girls are being supported with scholastic materials including school fees and school uniforms; this has helped lessen the burden on their parents who have assumed the responsibility of taking care of their children.

Some of the girls that have been withdrawn from child marriages are back into school

2.5.4 Decrease In School Dropouts

Bembeke CDSS in Dedza, is one of the schools that CYECE has heavily engaged with in a bid to enhance the SRHR of girls in the district. It is situated right in the center of TA Kamenyagwaza area and it is the only prominent Secondary School which gives it prominence as it is a symbol of pride in the community. The school has a population of 500 students. The school also had high rates of school drop outs due to early pregnancies.

It is with this background that CYECE became involved with the school by establishing an after-school youth club to discuss youth SRHR issues. CYECE also trained teachers as matrons and patrons to these youth clubs. These clubs have had great impact at the school and has
helped reduce the rates of early pregnancies by empowering youths with knowledge on their SRH rights. As a result, the dropout rates have decreased.

The Headteacher at Bembeke CDSS gave evidence to the great impact that the program has had especially at her school. Mrs Ireen Zimba indicated that when CYECE was just starting the program (2013), they were experiencing 21 dropouts due to pregnancies per year. In 2014, the number dropped to 11 and in 2015, the number has dropped to only 4 drop outs.

“This is very encouraging to us. We can trace that this project has helped change the lives of the girls in our community.”

Ireen Zimba – Headteacher, Bembeke CDSS

CONCLUSION
As this booklet testifies, the lives of the girls in the Kamenyagwaza, Dedza have been changed. They have been empowered with knowledge which has made them assertive and bold. They now have the power over their bodies and can access SRH services from health facilities. This change will help decrease the number of early pregnancies as well as child marriages. This is a step forward towards building a healthy, happy generation of youths in Malawi.